c.1
Spicks

SECRET

097.3
Z1092
No. 1665

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

Research and Analysis Branch

R & A No. 1665

(C.I. No. 202)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REFERENCE DIVISION
FILE COPY
PLEASE RETURN
REF

GERMAN PLANS TO DESTROY TERRITORIES AS THEY RETREAT

Description

Discussion of evidence to the effect that the Germans have made specific preparations to destroy territories as they retreat.

17 December 1943

Copy No. 163

ITALY

The only direct evidence of German preparations to destroy Italian territory as they retreat northward is found in a Bari dispatch of November 3 from Associated Press correspondent Wes Gallagher, describing preparations for demolitions in Rome. 1/ This dispatch reads in part;

> "Refugees arriving here from Rome today....
> ..... liable to be shot."

In addition, German practice in Italy thus far appears to reflect a definite plan for devastating areas as they retreat. The destruction carried out in Naples, Gaeta, and elsewhere has been abundantly described in the American press. 2/

Refugees arriving here from Rome today said that city has been heavily mined and quoted the Germans as saying they will do to Rome what they did to Naples, "Eternal City or no Eternal City."

Nazi engineers are mining all large buildings. There are tons of explosives under every ministry and all large hotels. Bridges and the main aqueducts have been mined.

Some of the mines, the refugees reported, are equipped with time devices designed to set them off after the city is occupied by the Allies, the same tactic that resulted in heavy civilian casualties in Naples.

The refugees said the Germans purposed to destroy all Italian government records in order to leave a chaotic situation for those who come in to administer the country.

They painted the following word picture of Rome today:

The city has been mapped, with squads assigned to districts to search every building, including private homes, for machinery, works of art, jewelry, silverware, even automobiles and tires and anything else that might be of value to the Italians or the Allies.

1/ Washington Post, Nov. 6.

2/ See, in addition to the newspaper stories on Naples, especially the following: "Nazis' morale in Italy called still unshaken," New York Herald Tribune, Nov. 8; "Nazis blow up port of Gaeta," ibid., Nov. 9; "Harbor of Leghorn wrecked by Nazis," New York Times, Nov. 12; "Nazis in Italy destroying all villages in Allied path," New York Herald Tribune, Dec. 6.

Civilians who attempt to defy or thwart this systematic looting are liable to be shot.

Mussolini's new Fascist regime has mobilized all Italians between 18 and 52, with the Nazis enforcing the measure.

Anyone between these ages found on the streets is liable to be arrested, crowded aboard a train like cattle and taken to northern Italy or Germany for forced labor.

Rome's food supply is extremely serious, for the Germans are regularly requisitioning a large part of what produce is reaching the city.

GERMAN PLANS TO DESTROY TERRITORIES AS THEY RETREAT: FRANCE

Available reports to the effect that the Germans plan wholesale destruction if and when they retreat from France are scanty.

1. A number of reports have come in to the effect that the Germans do not plan to declare Paris an open city, but would rather see it suffer as their own cities have suffered. It is reported that fortified works are being built inside Paris. The Place de la Concorde and the Place de la Republique are mentioned as two such fortified areas. It is also reported that some of the German administration buildings have charges of dynamite laid under them.[1]

2. The French underground paper Combat (15 May 1943) says that the Germans plan to destroy all larger factories in France before leaving. It says that most of these factories are already mined.

3. There are a number of reports which can be interpreted as indicative of a German plan to deport or kill large sections of the French population. The underground paper already referred to says that the Germans intend to deport all French males, or slaughter them if deportation is not practicable. There have been rumors that the Germans intend to deport all reserve officers in the army, and that these are kept in constant surveillance. The French police are reported to have a list of people who will be taken into preventative arrest at the moment of Allied landing. The French underground has drawn up its plans for the day of invasion on the assumption that there would be a determined effort on the part of the Germans to liquidate its forces. It publicized an alleged German plan to issue posters etc., in the name of de Gaulle and Giraud which would lead the underground into self-exposure.[2]

4. Otto Abetz, in his recent visit to Vichy, emphasized to a neutral person the resolute character of German resistance to Allied invasion of France, and said that the battle would be fought over the corpses of Frenchmen.[3]

1. Pressintel, Geneva, 1 November 1943; FCC Ticker, 8, 17, 20, August 1943; New York Herald Tribune, 9 September 1943; one secret source.
2. CIL45428-5; FCC Ticker, 13 November 1943; secret sources.
3. CIF 25077, 2 December 1943.

SECRET

GERMAN PLANS FOR DEMOLITION

While there is no specified evidence for Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria, the Balkan Section believes that the Germans intend to destroy all vital installations in these and other Balkan countries as they retreat. Something like the Russian "scorched earth" policy is looked for: this may well be carried out with additional savagery, in order to render the Allied task of rehabilitation as difficult as possible.

Specifically, there have been reports which may shed some light on German intentions in Rumania and Greece:

1. From Rumania it is reported that the Germans plan to destroy the airports of Kishinev and Ismail at the last possible moment during the evacuation of Bessarabia. The electric plants at the following places are also marked for destruction: Chilia, Ismail, Reni, Cetatea-Alba, Valcov, and Kishinev; as are the telephone installations. All grain in storage at Reni, Ismail, and Chilia will be evacuated via the Danube, for which purpose all available ships have been requisitioned. The grain will be shipped to Oltenitza, Turnu, Magurele, and Calarashi. Factories which can not be evacuated will be destroyed.

2. From Greece there have been reports that elaborate arrangements have been made to dynamite the Marathon dam, and thus to cut off the entire Athens water supply at the last moment before retreat. In view of the German activities in Naples, this report is entirely credible. Athens is especially vulnerable, and would suffer most particularly from any such German move. The Allies would be correspondingly incommoded.